

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering this application.

I. Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-6 are pending in this application. Claim 1 is independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claim 1.

II. Claim Amendments

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify the present invention. No new matter has been added by way of these amendments.

III. Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 102

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0050096 to Costantini et al. (“Costantini”). Claim 1 has been amended in this reply to clarify the present invention recited. To the extent that this rejection may still apply to amended claim 1, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

As amended, claim 1 recites a resist stripping equipment that includes a stripping solution tank in which resist stripping solution is preserved, a resist stripping chamber in which a substrate covered with resist is accommodated, a spray which is connected to the stripping solution tank and sprays the resist stripping solution into the resist in the resist

stripping chamber, a solution line which supplies the sprayed resist stripping solution from the resist stripping chamber to the resist stripping tank, a gas line which supplies a mixed gas containing a resist stripping solution component from the resist stripping container to outside, a gas/liquid separation block which is connected to the gas line, and which separates the resist stripping solution component from the introduced mixed gas, and a recovered resist stripping solution line which is connected to the gas/liquid separation block and supplies the separated resist stripping solution component to the stripping solution tank.

Embodiments of the present invention provide a spray to supply liquid solution onto the substrate. Furthermore, the resist stripping equipment has two outlet routes from the chamber 11 to the stripping solution tank 13. One route is a recovered stripping solution line which passes through the gas/liquid separation block 3. Another route is a solution line by which the solution after spraying is ejected from chamber 11 to stripping solution tank 12 without passing the gas/liquid separation block 3.

Costantini discloses a receiver tank (22 and 32) and a process chamber 37. The fluid in chamber 37 is supplied to the receiver tank (22 and 32) via a separating block (56 and 62). Because the fluid in the process chamber is in a supercritical state, no spray is introduced into the chamber 37, and only one route from the chamber 37 to the receiver tank (22 and 32) via the separating block (56 and 62) is disclosed. Thus, Costantini does not disclose a spray introduced into the chamber, nor does it disclose two outlet routes as required by the present claims.

In view of the above, Costantini fails to show the present invention as recited in amended claim 1. Thus, claim 1, as amended, is patentable over Costantini for at least

these reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

IV. Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 103

Claims 2-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Costantini in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,762,749 issued to Suzuki et al. (“Suzuki”).

As discussed above, Costantini fails to teach a spray introduced into the chamber, nor does it teach the two outlet routes as required by the present claims. Suzuki fails to provide what Costantini lacks. Suzuki discloses apparatus for removing treating liquid from the surfaces of a substrate that has undergone a wet treatment which includes airknives 2 and 3 in the processing chamber 27 facing substrate 5.

Because Suzuki fails to provide what Costantini lacks, claim 1 is patentable over Costantini and Suzuki, whether considered separately or in combination. Claims 2-3 depend from claim 1; therefore, claims 2-3 are patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Costantini in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,715,612 issued to Schwenkler (“Schwenkler”).

As discussed above, Costantini fails to teach a spray introduced into the chamber, nor does it teach the two outlet routes as required by the present claims. Schwenkler fails to provide what Costantini lacks. Schwenkler discloses a substrate cleaner and dryer which includes a gas pump 116.

Because Schwenkler fails to provide what Costantini lacks, claim 1 is patentable over Costantini and Schwenkler, whether considered separately or in combination. Claim 4 depends from claim 1; therefore, claim 4 is patentable for at least the same reasons.

Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 5-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Costantini in view of Schwenkler and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 4,904,339 issued to Diehl et al. (“Diehl”).

As discussed above, Costantini fails to teach a spray introduced into the chamber, nor does it teach the two outlet routes as required by the present claims. Schwenkler discloses a substrate cleaner and dryer which includes a gas pump 116. Diehl discloses a plurality of etch chambers 27, 28 in communication with a rinse chamber 31. Diehl fails to provide what Costantini and Schwenkler lack.

Because Diehl fails to provide what Costantini and Schwenkler lack, claim 1 is patentable over Costantini, Schwenkler, and Diehl, whether considered separately or in combination. Claims 5-6 depend from claim 1 which has shown to be patentable over Costantini. Therefore, claims 5-6 are patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

V. Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 07200/032001).

Respectfully submitted,

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